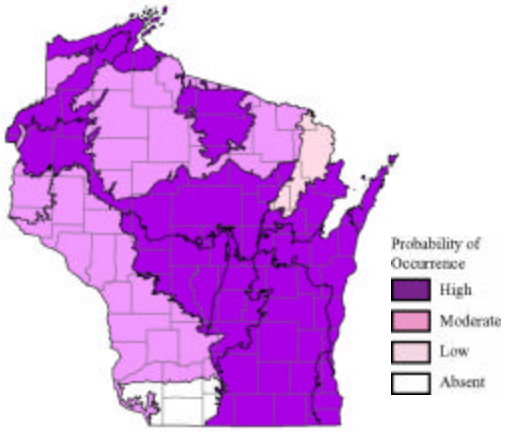
Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*)

Species Assessment Scores*

State rarity:	3
State threats:	4
State population trend:	5
Global abundance:	4
Global distribution:	2
Global threats:	3
Global population trend:	4
Mean Risk Score:	3.6
Area of importance:	2

* Please see the Description of Vertebrate Species Summaries (Section 3.1.1) for definitions of criteria and scores.



Ecological Landscape Associations
Please note that this is not a range map. Shading does not imply that the species is present throughout the Landscape, but represents the probability that the species occurs somewhere in the Landscape.

Landscape -community Combinations of Highest Ecological Priority

Ecological Landscape	Community
Central Lake Michigan Coastal	Emergent marsh
Central Sand Hills	Emergent marsh
Central Sand Hills	Impoundments/Reservoirs
Central Sand Hills	Inland lakes
Central Sand Plains	Emergent marsh
Central Sand Plains	Impoundments/Reservoirs
Central Sand Plains	Northern sedge meadow
Forest Transition	Emergent marsh
Forest Transition	Impoundments/Reservoirs
North Central Forest	Emergent marsh
Northern Highland	Emergent marsh
Northern Highland	Emergent marsh - wild rice
Northern Highland	Inland lakes
Northern Highland	Northern sedge meadow
Northern Highland	Submergent marsh
Northern Lake Michigan Coastal	Emergent marsh
Northern Lake Michigan Coastal	Northern sedge meadow
Northwest Sands	Emergent marsh
Northwest Sands	Emergent marsh - wild rice
Northwest Sands	Inland lakes
Northwest Sands	Northern sedge meadow
Northwest Sands	Submergent marsh
Southeast Glacial Plains	Emergent marsh
Southeast Glacial Plains	Impoundments/Reservoirs
Southeast Glacial Plains	Inland lakes
Southern Lake Michigan Coastal	Emergent marsh
Superior Coastal Plain	Emergent marsh
Superior Coastal Plain	Emergent marsh - wild rice
Superior Coastal Plain	Submergent marsh
Western Coulee and Ridges	Emergent marsh
Western Prairie	Emergent marsh

Threats and Issues

- Black Terns nest in emergent marshes associated with large lake/wetland complexes. Habitat loss and degradation, and habitat isolation and fragmentation, due to drainage, filling, and lake shore development are the principal threats to black terns.
- In some cases, nesting habitat has been lost due to artificially high water levels maintained by man-made dams, or by natural, extended periods of high water which compromised or eliminated marsh emergent vegetation.
- Purple loosestrife may dominate native vegetation and form stands too dense for nesting black terns. Eurasian carp activity is another factor involved in the disappearance of suitable nesting habitat. An increase in feral Mute Swans at a Michigan site may have caused a sharp decline in breeding Black Terns between 1980 and 1988.
- During the 1980s, Black Tern eggs from Green Bay had higher PCB and pesticide residue levels than levels in Black Tern eggs from the Mississippi River and interior colonies.
- Exposure to organohalogen compounds may be a concern for this species.
- Human disturbance, particularly prolonged disturbance, is a potential threat because of the possibility of exposing eggs or chicks to adverse weather that could result in egg/chick mortality.
- Great Horned Owl predation has been identified as a mortality factor for terns.

Priority Conservation Actions

- Initiation of major lake or wetland ecosystem renovation projects where breeding habitat is declining is the most important management action. The highest priority Wisconsin sites in descending order are: 1. Rush Lake; 2. Green Bay west shore; 3. Winnebago Pool Lakes (including Lake Poygan); 4. Horicon Marsh Wildlife Area; and 5. Big Muskego Lake.
- At managed state properties, it will be important to maintain long-term productivity of marshes by mimicking natural hydrologic regimes and adapting management techniques to localized conditions. Periodic drawdowns will benefit Black Terns and other species.
- Control of carp and purple loosestrife is an ongoing concern.
- At some sites, removal of Great Horned Owls (or mink) known to kill chicks may be essential to maintain or preserve colony productivity.
- Use of artificial nesting platforms may benefit Black Terns and should be evaulated on a site-by-ste basis.
- Black Terns may benefit from creation or restoration of marshes >20 ha or marshes >5 and <20 ha within a wetland complex. In large marshes, habitat patches >20 ha may be appropriate, with patches having a 50:50 interspersion of vegetation and water.
- During the nesting season, water levels must remain stable. Water levels that encourage the stability of emergent patches must be a part of comprehensive management plans.
- Continued monitoring of extant colonies to document long-term population trends is needed so that listing and delisting decisions can proceed.
- Training on when to monitor colonies and what data to collect will be needed as more individuals become involved with data collection.
- Both an institutional framework and partnership alliances that adopt an ecosystem approach to wetland conservation will benefit Black Terns.
- Partnerships between the WDNR and organizations dedicated to wetland conservation are essential to the long-term management and conservation of wetland complexes that provide breeding habitat for this species.